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With the Communist regime's emphases on youth, loyalty to the state, socialist construction, and the rooting out of feudalistic and bourgeois ideas, the problem of the proper attitude of youth toward parents needed clarification. An article on the subject in the January 1955 issue of China Youth emphasizes that "respect for one's parents is part of...individual or social Communist morals," but the attitude "must be governed by the interests of the Revolution." If the parents are counterrevolutionaries, they should not be respected but treated as enemies; if they are counterrevolutionaries who have been pardoned by the people and are still able to work, they should be made to "reform through labor," and should not be pitied or helped. Only if they are unable to support themselves should they be aided by the children, "for if the children do not support them, then the burden will fall on the state, which is obviously undesirable." As to bourgeois parents, they should normally be shown respect and concern; but if they break the law, "the children should justly and dispassionately examine their crime." Working class parents "should of course be respected, loved, and taken care of." They should not be discriminated against or ridiculed because of the shortcomings they have inherited from the old regime, but "should be patiently persuaded to see the light."[35]

35. Ibid., 973, pp. 30-32.

care and concern of those in authority, the people were to provide material support through taxes and labor; they were to serve their masters loyally and submissively; they were to obey the rules which custom (personalized as the wise rulers of the past) and the laws laid down for them. And in those laws the heaviest punishments were decreed for those who showed unfilial behavior in the family, or, in its political counterpart, rebellion against the state.[21]

These were the patterns of authority to which the individual was subject. His personality was formed within the family; his status in society was determined by his family's status. To understand the individual of traditional China, we must see him within this setting; to understand the changes being wrought by the Communists, we must take into account some of the tensions and dissatisfactions which the family system--particularly in its period of decay -- set up in the individual.

The role of the individual was determined by his position in the family, and he was taught to fill that particular role. For example, an older brother was held responsible for his younger brother, and was taught to be nice in play to those younger in years. The younger sons were expected to be less sober and responsible; their mothers often spoiled them. Throughout all the complex relations of the family, roles were assigned

21. The Classic of Filial Piety says, "Of the 3,000 crimes punishable by the five punishments, none is greater than unfiliality." (i.e., failure to submit to authority.) For a discussion, cf. Etienne Balázs, Le Traité Juridique du Souei-chou, Paris, 1954, p. 144.

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and the individual's life and character were formed by the role he played. Freedom of choice and freedom to develop individuality were thus rigidly limited.[22] 593 156

The well-being of the family group was the individual's prime concern. He was committed to the work which would assure the family's prosperity; he was obliged to protect the family's reputation, for example, by paying off the gambling debts of a family member rather than have the family disgraced; to continue to live in a tense and unhappy household rather than to break away and thereby weaken the family's solidarity.

In exchange for his submission to authority and discipline in every phase of his personal life, the individual was given the basic necessities of life and the help of the family's influence in obtaining jobs, and in obtaining a bride, etc. Nepotism was sanctioned by the classics, and family members benefited when one of them rose to wealth or power.

The only social relationship which an individual could enjoy with less family interference was friendship, which was the most cherished thing in life. Many a Chinese poet has dealt with this theme. Popular novels and dramas have treated it with vividness and force. Friendship has the overtones of the elder-brother, younger-brother relationship. As John Weakland has observed, this type of relationship between individuals, self-elected, with virtual equality between the participants, is a refuge from the father-dominated, rigid hierarchy of the family.[23] 572

22. Bunzel-Weakland, pp. 47-64.
23. Ibid., pp. 137-47.